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## Panel Likely to Seek to Reduce Casey's Policy-Setting Role

Proposal Would Dilute CIA Director's White House Influence and Broaden Powers of McFarlane

By MICHAEL WINES, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—The Senate Intelligence Committee is likely to recommend next year that President Reagan reduce the CIA director's role in setting policy and instead limit his duties to "professional intelligence work," Sen. Dave Durenberger (R-Minn.), the committee chairman, said Wednesday.

In a lengthy luncheon session with reporters, Durenberger suggested that the job of recommending policy changes such as secret operations against other governments should rest with the President's national security adviser, while the director of central intelligence should carry out the changes.

The proposal apparently would dilute the White House role of Reagan's close friend and political strategist, CIA Director William J. Casey, and broaden the powers of National Security Adviser Robert C. McFarlane. It was revealed against a background of growing criticism of the way top CIA officials handled Vitaly Yurchenko, the Soviet KGB officer whose much-touted defection to CIA hands embarrassingly backfired last week.

"One of the things we ought to be sorting out," Durenberger said, "is whether or not maybe effectively in the present situation, McFarlane shouldn't be the President's right hand on intelligence input through policy and Casey ought to be the pro who runs the organization."

Although the senator said that Casey had sought to make the CIA a policy-setting agency early in his tenure—citing the agency's advocacy of top-secret operations in Central America such as the mining of Nicaraguan harbors—he added that Casey has "matured" in the top CIA post and strongly praised his management of the organization.

A Senate intelligence aide downplayed the thrust of Durenberger's remarks late Wednesday, saying the committee does not intend to recommend that the President shift any of Casey's current duties to McFarlane. Instead, he said, the panel hopes only to force McFarlane and other "consumers" of the

CIA's intelligence to specify their needs so that the intelligence agency knows what type of information to gather.

The aide said that Casey occasionally "may give some personal advice to the President" but exercises no major policy powers. The Senate panel's proposal envisions "no fundamental role change, just an exercise over the reinvigoration of the way the system should be operating," he said.

Durenberger's proposal, he said, calls for "more clarification of the current responsibilities" of the CIA director and policy-makers "and acceptance on both sides of those responsibilities."

"It's not that Bill Casey doesn't do that now, but it's not done in a very well organized and orchestrated way," he said. He said the proposal has been in the works for several months and is unrelated to criticism of the agency stemming from the Yurchenko affair.

However, Durenberger's remarks appeared to suggest a lessening of the White House role now played by Casey, the only director of central intelligence to hold a post in a President's Cabinet.

Casey, widely regarded as the most powerful intelligence chief since the post was created in 1947, is credited by some with helping devise the Reagan Administration's strategy of covert operations against Nicaragua and in support of struggling Central American nations on its borders.

Durenberger strongly praised Casey's "professionalism" and said that he is responsible for a general improvement in the agency's morale.

"I'm giving him a plus on the job, despite all the things I've got to swallow . . . to do that," he said.

However, some senators on the intelligence panel believe "that the national security adviser to the President ought to really be the person responsible . . . for the linkage between intelligence and policy, and the (director of central intelligence) ought to be a person who does professional intelligence work."

Some intelligence experts said Wednesday that the adoption of

Durenberger's proposal might have little effect on either Casey or federal intelligence policy, partly because Casey's central role in White House intelligence affairs is based on his close personal links to Reagan.

Additionally, the director of central intelligence—who not only heads the CIA but also oversees some duties of the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency—has budgetary and advisory powers that could not be diluted without Congress's permission. And Durenberger suggested no changes in law.

While Durenberger did not directly criticize Casey on Wednesday, he voiced concern about the agency's performance in some key areas, including intelligence assessments of the Soviet Union and South Africa.

He also sharply criticized the agency's assessments of the future of the South Africa government, saying there is a "vacuum" of independent and unbiased information about the country's problems.